CITY OF ISSAQUAH
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT
ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

NOTICE OF DECISION

TO: Tony Nguyen
City of Issaquah Public Works Engineering
P.O. Box 1307
Issaquah, WA 98027

SUBJECT: Mt. Hood Booster Station

APPLICATION: ASDP15-00001 (Administrative Site Development Permit)

DATE OF DECISION: May 28, 2015

REQUEST: The City of Issaquah Public Works Engineering Department proposes to replace the existing Mt. Hood Booster Station. The booster station pumps water from the Mt. Hood zone (483 feet) to the higher elevation Wildwood Zone (634 feet) and Wildwood reservoir to provide domestic water service to residents on Squak Mountain.

The current booster station is still operable, but the equipment is nearing the end of its expected lifespan, many parts are obsolete, and the building is vulnerable to damage from seismic events. Replacing the pump station with a more earthquake–resistant structure was recommended in the 1997 Seismic Vulnerability Assessment.

The new booster station would be constructed adjacent to the existing building, within the fenced confines of the Mt. Hood booster station/reservoir, and constructed over existing asphalt. There would be no grading, except for trenching of utilities and no tree removal required.

The new booster station would be constructed within 30 feet of a steep slope area to the north of the site. Per the City's Critical Areas Regulations, a 50-foot buffer is required from critical area steep slopes and the buffer may be reduced to 10 feet with a geotechnical report. A geotechnical report prepared for the proposal recommended a minimum 25 foot setback or buffer from the steep slope area.

The existing Mt. Hood water reservoir will not be replaced or altered and the proposal would not expand capacity of water service.

The project is part of the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and is identified in the City's most recent 2012 Water System Plan Update. The new booster station will be designed to meet City and Washington State Department of Health (DOH) standards.

LOCATION: 325 Mt. Hood Drive SW

ZONING: Community Facilities – Facilities (CF-F).

DECISION MADE: On May 28, 2015 the Development Services Department conditionally approved the Administrative Site Development Permit for the above proposal. Approval of this application is based on the submittal of January 26, 2015, Exhibits 1 through

5, and approval is subject to the following conditions:

The applicant shall comply with the SEPA Mitigated Determination of Nonsignificance issued for the project on April 8, 2015. The SEPA mitigation measures are included in the project conditions below:

1. A geotechnical report evaluating specific building plans and the steep slope buffer reduction shall be submitted prior to the issuance of construction and building permits. The geotechnical report shall follow City of Issaquah Development Services "Soils Report Requirements." A third-party independent review of the geotechnical report may be required at the applicant's expense.
2. A landscape plan specifying the type (species) and number of plants is required, with the objective of increasing the visual screening of the facility from neighboring properties. The landscape plan shall be approved prior to issuance of construction permits.
3. In order to protect trees adjacent to the facility during construction, approved tree protection measures must be installed prior to any construction or demolition activities. Fencing or protection measures shall be outside the critical root zone of significant trees.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

1. The booster station site is zoned Community Facilities – Facilities (CF-F). Pump stations are included in the definition of "minor utility facilities" and allowed in the CF-F zone with a Level 2 Administrative Site Development Permit (ASDP).
2. A Level 2 ASDP is an administrative review of the project with notice to property owners within 300 feet of the site. The Notice of Application was sent to property owners on March 27, 2015 and a 14-day comment period provided. Comments received included an inquiry from an adjacent resident regarding the appearance of the booster station building, noise and landscape screening. The resident was satisfied with staff response. Another comment regarded a trail connection through the site to Hillside Park. This trail connection will be maintained with the project proposal.
3. There are specific approval criteria in the Land Use Code for public utility facilities in the CF-F zone (IMC 18.07.480.D); the criteria are addressed later in this staff report.
4. A SEPA Mitigated Determination of Nonsignificance (MDNS) was prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposal (Exhibit 5). A comment/appeal period was provided between April 8, 2015 and April 29, 2015. No comments or appeals were received. SEPA mitigation measures are required as conditions of approval for this permit.
5. Critical Areas Regulations (IMC 18.10): There is a steep slope environmental critical area (greater than 40% slopes) on the north side of the booster station area. Per the City's Critical Areas Regulations, steep slopes require a 50-foot buffer, which may be reduced to a minimum of 10 feet with a geotechnical report evaluating the buffer reduction. There is a 15-foot building setback required from the buffer. A geotechnical report (Pan Geo Inc.) was prepared to evaluate geologic conditions and evidence of slope instability. The geotechnical report recommends the booster station building be located a minimum of 25 feet from the top of the steep slope. The new booster station is proposed to be located 30 feet from the top of the steep slope. A SEPA mitigation measure and project condition requires a geotechnical report evaluating specific building plans to be submitted prior to the issuance of construction and building permits.

The site is mapped within a coal mine hazard area, specifically the Squak-Cougar Area No. 4 Mine. The geotechnical report evaluated coal mine maps to determine the extent and depth of mine workings below the site. The report concluded a gangway to the mine is approximately 790 feet below the existing grade of the proposed booster station building. For purposes of risk assessment, underground mine workings that are in excess of 300 feet below the surface are considered "Declassified." "Declassified" coal mine hazard areas are areas where the risk of catastrophic collapse is not significant and that the site does not require any special engineering or hazard mitigation.

6. The project Planning application and plans were routed to all project reviewing departments and divisions, and their comments and concerns have been addressed in this Notice of Decision.

7. Approval Criteria – Public Utility Facilities (IMC 18.07.480.D)

   1. Architectural Form and Character: A public building which houses all or a majority of a public utility facility must be compatible with the architectural form of surrounding buildings.

      a. Exceptions – Significant Elements: Compatibility of architectural form is not applicable to a utility facility where significant elements of the facility are not housed in a building; however, screening is required to ensure compatibility with adjacent uses.

      b. Exceptions – Isolated Elements: Compatibility of architectural form is not applicable for isolated minor elements such as pad-mounted transformers, telephone pedestals and metering stations; however, screening is required as established in this section, to ensure compatibility with adjacent uses.

   Response: The booster station site is adjacent to a single-family residential area. The booster station building is designed to look like a residential structure. The building has a sloped roof, false windows and a front door, so the building character is compatible with the residential neighborhood.

   2. Development Standards: All buildings and structures shall conform to development standards including setback, height standards, and impervious surface of the most restrictive contiguous zoning district as established in IMC 18.07.360, District standards table.

      a. Exceptions – Height: Public utility structures such as transmitting and receiving towers and overhead lines and poles may exceed the height limit of the surrounding zoning district(s); however, they shall meet all other approval criteria. Overhead transmission and distribution lines and poles shall also be exempt from the setback and screening requirements of the surrounding zoning district.

      b. Exception – Lot Size/Width: Minor public utility facilities are not required to conform to the required lot size and width as established in the district standards table.

   Response: The booster station building meets development standards of the adjacent SF-S zone; including setbacks, height standards, and impervious surface limits. The SF-S zone is the most restrictive contiguous zoning.

3. Height: Public utility structures such as communication towers and water storage tanks shall be designed so as to be the lowest height possible to adequately serve the needs of the utility.

Response: The booster station would have a 15-foot building height. This is the building height allowed for accessory structures (i.e. garages, sheds) in the SF-S zone.

4. Undergrounding: Public utility facilities such as communication facilities shall be installed underground or within buildings to the greatest extent practical in order to maximize safety and minimize visual and noise impacts upon surrounding properties. Public utility facilities such as distribution lines should also be installed underground in accordance with the terms and conditions established by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission.

Response: Utility lines including electrical and water lines from the booster station would be underground.

5. Comprehensive Plan Compliance: The proposed public utility facility shall be consistent with:

   a. The need to serve the land use patterns and densities contemplated in the land use element of the Comprehensive Plan and, if applicable, the King County Comprehensive Plan;

   b. The public service obligations of the servicing utility and its ability to provide service throughout its system;

   c. The utilities and public services element of the Comprehensive Plan, including the goals and policies adopted therein and utility element map(s) showing the general location and capacity of all existing and proposed utility facilities.

Response: The location of the booster station is consistent with the Water System map included in the Utilities and Public Services Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The existing Mt. Hood water reservoir will not be replaced or altered and the proposed booster station replacement would not expand capacity of water service.

The project is part of the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and is identified in the City's most recent 2012 Water System Plan Update.

7. Environmental Impacts: The existing natural environment of the area shall be identified, along with impacts of the proposed facility upon the natural environment, and what shall be required as mitigation.

Response: Environmental impacts were identified and evaluated in the SEPA Determination (Exhibit 5). There is a steep slope critical area (greater than 40% slopes) on the north side of the booster station area. The steep slope buffer has been reduced from 50 to 10 feet, after a geotechnical report evaluated the slope stability. The steep slope buffer reduction is consistent with Critical Area Regulations.

8. Maintenance: Long term maintenance requirements shall be identified, funding options shall be noted, and a long term maintenance program shall be provided.

Response: The proposed booster station replacement is essentially a long-term maintenance project. The existing booster station is in operable condition. However, the equipment is nearing the end of its expected lifespan, many parts are obsolete, and the building is vulnerable to damage from seismic events.

9. Noise: No machinery or equipment may cause noise beyond established state standards, as measured at the property line, electrical interference or similar disturbances.

Response: Booster station equipment would not cause noise beyond established state standards. The new equipment would generate less noise than the existing equipment.

10. Residential Areas:

    a. Impacts: Public utility facilities shall, whenever possible, be located and designed to minimize adverse impacts on nearby residential areas;

    b. Storage: In residential zones, outdoor storage of public utility related vehicles or any outdoor storage of public utility related materials outside the public utility buildings or structures must be screened.

Response: The proposal is within the existing fenced confines of the booster station/ reservoir site. The booster station building is designed to look like a residential structure; with a sloped roof, false windows and a front door to minimize adverse impacts on the nearby residential neighborhood. There is no outdoor storage and the site is fenced to screen the facility. Existing trees and supplemental planting surrounding the booster station/reservoir site will also screen the facility from surrounding residences.

11. Screening: The public utility facility shall be screened to ensure compatibility with adjacent uses. Public utility facilities such as transformers, regulator stations, substations and other such mechanical structures shall be screened with landscaping and/or other such material that provides screening during the entire year.

Response: The booster station/reservoir facility is fenced. Existing trees and supplemental planting surrounding the booster station/reservoir site will also screen the facility year-round from surrounding residences.

Time Limit of Approval:

The final decision approving the Administrative Site Development Permit is valid for three years as specified by IMC 18.04.220-C-5, or as amended by the Land Use Code.

EXHIBIT LIST:

1. Administrative Site Development Permit application, ASDP15-00001
2. Construction Permit Plans including the booster station plans, elevations, details, storm and grading plan, TESC plan, demolition plan, landscape plan
3. Geotechnical report, Pan Geo Inc.,dated October 13, 2014) - including steep slope and coal mine hazard reports
4. Environmental checklist, dated January 26, 2015
5. SEPA Determination, issued on April 8, 2015

Peter Rosen

Peter Rosen, Senior Environmental Planner

5/28/2015

Date